

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBAAFUR ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9847

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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 3722

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PK

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION WITH SHAH NAWAZ REGARDING UNFAVORABLE
PAKISTAN PRESS AGAINST U.S.

1. THE SLOW BURN I HAVE BEEN FEELING RECENTLY OVER
THE INCREASING TENDENCY OF THE PAKISTAN PRESS TO
ATTACK THE U.S. FINALLY CAME TO A HEAD YESTERDAY, BUT
WITH BHUTTO, AGHA SHAHI AND AZIZ AHMED ALL OUTSIDE
THE CAPITAL, I WAS NOT ABLE TO DO MUCH ABOUT IT. I
TRIED UNSUCCESSFULLY TO GET SHAHI ON THE PHONE IN
KARACHI.

2. I HAD A VERY FRANK TALK ON THIS SUBJECT WITH AZIZ
AHMED AT THE PAKISTAN MILITARY ACADEMY LAST WEEKEND
AFTER BHUTTO'S IMPROMPTU REMARKS ON THAT OCCASION WHICH
I CONSIDERED UNNECESSARILY HUMILIATING. I GAVE HIM
VARIOUS INSTANCES WHERE THE PAK PRESS WAS MERELY FOLLOWING,
AND EMBELLISHING UPON, COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA AND ALLEGATIONS
WITH NO APPARENT REGARD FOR THE TRUTH AND NEVER OF COURSE
ANY CRITICISM OF THE OTHER SIDE. I TOLD HIM THEN THAT
I THOUGHT BHUTTO HIMSELF MUST BE OPERATING UNDER A FALSE
IMPRESSION THAT THE MOOD IN AMERICA WAS SUCH THAT
CRITICISM OF US OVER SOUTH EAST ASIA WOULD IN FACT BE
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WELCOMED BY THE AMERICAN CONGRESS AND AMERICAN PEOPLE.

AZIZ AHMED REMINDED ME THAT THERE WAS PLENTY OF SUCH EXPRESSION IN THE PRESS OF THE U.S. ITSELF AND WONDERED WHY I SHOULD FEEL SO STRONGLY IF OTHERS SHOULD MERELY SAY WHAT AMERICANS ARE SAYING. I TOLD HIM IT WAS A FAR DIFFERENT THING FOR A FOREIGN HEAD OF STATE TO JOIN IN THE CHORUS BEING PURSUED BY ELEMENTS OF THE U.S. PRESS. I TOLD HIM THAT THE ONLY SINGLE SOUR NOTE OF BHUTTO'S RECENT STATE VISIT WAS ON THIS VERY SUBJECT. I SAID HIS TALKS ON THE HILL HAD GONE WELL EXCEPT FOR THIS, BUT THAT ZABLOCKI AND OTHERS HAD BEEN EXTREMELY IRRITATED AT BHUTTO'S GRATUITOUS ADVICE THAT HE HAD BEEN RIGHT ALL ALONG AND WE HAD BEEN WRONG IN SOUTH EAST ASIA. I SAID THAT ZABLOCKI HAD MADE THE POINT TO ME THAT WHILE SOME AMERICANS MIGHT AGREE WITH WHAT BHUTTO HAD SAID, HE THOUGHT THAT SUCH GRATUITOUS ADVICE FROM A VISITING FOREIGN OFFICIAL WAS ESPECIALLY IRRITATING.

3. THIS MORNING SHAH NAWAZ OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE ASKED TO SEE ME IN WHAT I ASSUMED WOULD PRIMARILY BE A DEBRIEFING ON HIS RECENT VISIT TO NORTH KOREA AND PEKING. I DECIDED BEFORE I WENT THERE TO SPEAK STRONGLY ENOUGH ABOUT THE RECENT TRENDS IN THEIR PRESS TO ENSURE THAT IT WOULD GET TO BHUTTO PERSONALLY. TO MY SURPRISE SHAH NAWAZ OPENED THE SUBJECT HIMSELF. HE SAID THAT CONCERN WITHIN THE GOP OVER THE RECENT TRENDS IN THE PRESS AS REGARDS THE U.S. HAD GROWN TO THE POINT WHERE THEY HAD DECIDED YESTERDAY THAT SOMETHING HAD TO BE DONE ABOUT IT. HE SAID THEY HAD MADE THE DECISION TO TALK TO ALL THE EDITORS AND THAT AGHA SHAHI HAD TAKEN ON THE TASK IN KARACHI, YUSEF BUCH, SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRIME MINISTER, HAD DONE THE JOB IN LAHORE. HE SAID THE FOREIGN OFFICE HAD TALKED TO THE RAWALPINDI PRESS. I INTERJECTED THAT EVEN SO AN EDITORIAL IN TODAY'S "NEW TIMES" OUT OF RAWALPINDI WAS ONE OF THE WORST SO FAR. SHAH NAWAZ SAID HE HAD READ THE EDITORIAL, THAT A REPRESENTATIVE FROM THAT PAPER HAD NOT BEEN PRESENT DURING YESTERDAY'S DISCUSSION WITH THE PRESS, AND THAT HE HAD ALREADY ASKED THE EDITOR TO COME SEE HIM.

4. I TOLD SHAH NAWAZ I WAS EXTREMELY APPRECIATIVE THAT
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THEY HAD TAKEN THIS COMBINED ACTION, AND PARTICULARLY SO BEFORE THE STRONG PROTEST THAT I HAD PLANNED TO GIVE HIM. I TOLD HIM I WAS NOW, OF COURSE, WILLING TO WAIT FOR THE RESULTS OF THEIR EFFORTS AND WOULD WITHHOLD MY PREVIOUS DECISION TO START SPEAKING OUT PUBLICLY ON THE ACCUSATIONS OF THE PRESS, BUT WOULD NOT HESITATE TO DO SO IN THE FUTURE IF NECESSARY. I SAID THAT I FELT THE PRESS HAD THE LIBERTY TO TAKE THE LINES THEY HAD

BECAUSE OF STATEMENTS BY THE PRIME MINISTER HIMSELF, AND
IF THE PRESS DID IN FACT REPRESENT THE FEELINGS OF THE
GOP, AFTER OUR VERY LONG FRIENDSHIP WITH PAKISTAN AND
ALL OF OUR HELP TO PAKISTAN OVER THE YEARS, I WOULD NOT
ONLY NOT WITHHOLD SUCH FEELINGS FROM WASHINGTON, BUT TAKE
THE INITIATIVE TO SEE THAT THIS ATTITUDE BECOMES KNOWN
TO THE AMERICAN CONGRESS AND PEOPLE. I SAID THAT
VERY FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES WERE INVOLVED. ON THE ONE HAND,
THE GOP LEADERSHIP STRESSES THEIR CONCERNS THAT
PAKISTAN ITSELF MAY BECOME THE VICTIM OF THE CONSPIRACY
INVOLVING RUSSIAN SUPPORT AGAINST PAKISTAN THROUGH
ITS NEIGHBORS. IN THE FACE OF THIS IT SEEMED TO ME
DANGEROUSLY INCONSISTENT THAT PAKISTAN WOULD APPEAR
TO BE "REJOICING" OVER THE TAKE-OVER OF TWO ASIAN
NATIONS BY OVERT COMMUNIST, AND COMMUNIST SUPPORTED,
AGGRESSION. AS I ENDED MY REMARKS SHAH NAWAZ LOOKED
UNCOMFORTABLE AND REPEATED AGAIN THAT THEY HAD ALREADY
TAKEN CORRECTIVE ACTION. I SAID I APPRECIATED THIS
NO END AS IT HAD COME AS QUITE A PERSONAL DISAPPOINTMENT
TO SEE THINGS TURN SOUR HERE SO QUICKLY AFTER THE
VERY SUCCESSFUL VISIT OF BHUTTO TO WASHINGTON.
BYROADE

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